Maintaining shared knowledge of acquaintance: Methods people use to establish who knows whom

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Acquaintance is a fundamental determinant of how people behave when interacting with one another. This article focuses on how this type of personal knowledge is an important consideration for people as social actors. Studying naturally-occurring social encounters, I describe how speakers use particular references to convey whether a recipient should be able to recognise a non-present third party. On some occasions, however, the presumption of recognisability or non-recognisability that underpins the use of a particular reference proves questionable. By exploring how recipients can challenge reference forms, and thereby reject claims of either recognisability or non-recognisability, I explain how people establish and maintain a shared understanding of who knows whom. I conclude by discussing motivations for this behaviour, and thereby contribute to understanding the commonsense reasoning that underpins orderly conduct in this aspect of social encounters.

Key words: Acquaintance; recognition; social network; intersubjectivity; conversation analysis; person reference; third parties; repair

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Introduction

At a fundamental level, the acquaintance or nonacquaintance of individuals can shape the manner in which they interact with one another. In this article, I show how this fundamental matter extends beyond the individuals involved in a current social encounter to include the recognisability, or non-recognisability, of non-present third parties. I do this through an examination of telephone calls from Community and Home Care (CHC) service centres, which is a setting where references to non-present third parties, in this case care workers, are routinely made. Because CHC clients may be either acquainted or unacquainted with any given care worker, these data provide an opportunity to explore how people convey this status to one another. Exploring referential practices that communicate recognisability or non-recognisability, I examine the presumptions underpinning their use, and the manner in which interlocutors can respond when a presumption is apparently unfounded. Throughout, I will show how people work to establish the recognisability of third parties and thereby implement a commonsense framework of their social network in which shared understandings of who knows whom can be developed, challenged, sustained, and modified.

In existing social psychological research on relationships, acquaintance has been conceptualised in several conceptually distinct ways. Most commonly, it describes a gradational process, and is used to explain how a person can become more or less acquainted with another person across time (e.g., Altman & Taylor, 1973; Felmlee & Sprecher, 2000; Hinde, 1997; Levinger, 1983; Newcomb, 1961; Vanlear, 1987). However, it can also be used to describe a type of relationship that can result from

the aforementioned process, in which acquaintanceship is distinct from other types of relationships like friendship (e.g., Fiske, 1992; Levinger, 1983; Sutcliffe, Dunbar, Binder, & Arrow, 2012). Finally, acquaintance can refer to a binary status, that is whether one person is either acquainted or unacquainted with another person. The research presented here contributes to understanding acquaintance as conceptualised in each of these ways, but in particular as a relational state, which has received much less attention in previous research.

Acquaintance as a binary status

At a basic level, acquaintance can be understood as a state of having at least some constituent knowledge of another person – their name, appearance, and so on – and nonacquaintance as referring to a state of not knowing about another person. There is, therefore, a recognitional underpinning of acquaintance, dividing the social world into those that someone should be able to recognise on the basis of individual attributes, even if only in a very basic way, and those for whom such recognition is not anticipated. Language has a unique role in providing a means for people to convey to one another the recognisability of others (Stivers, Enfield, & Levinson, 2007). Prior research (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996) has established that a speaker can convey an understanding that their recipient knows a third-party referent by using a 'recognitional reference'; most commonly, this is done with a referent's name. Alternatively, a speaker can convey their understanding that their recipient does not know a third party by referring to that party with a 'non-recognitional reference.' Conveying non-recognisability can be done in a range of ways. Here, I focus on descriptions that introduce an apparent non-acquaintance by describing a general category (e.g., "a lady") and then identifying a particular individual within that category (e.g., "called Kerry"). I will explore how people use this basic social practice to manage who is to be expected to know whom.

An individual's acquaintances are, of course, not fixed; networks of social relationships are dynamic and change across time (Kossinets & Watts, 2006). In this context, I show how claims about someone's basis for being able to recognise, or not recognise, a third party can be consequential. This matter proves sufficiently important that people will suspend otherwise ongoing activities to explicitly address the matter of recognisability. For this to be possible, they need techniques to develop and maintain a contemporary understanding of their own and other's social connections. This is the focus of the current article. I develop existing research (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996) by identifying a range of methods people use in their interactions with one another to maintain shared understanding of who knows whom. I also discuss the social consequences of this information to explain what motivates people to behave in this way.

Studying acquaintance in social interaction

Although researchers, including social psychologists, initially attempted to study the processes of acquaintance in naturalistic settings (e.g., Newcomb, 1961), research since the early 1970s has been dominated by laboratory studies (Berscheid, 1994; Huston & Levinger, 1978). The contrived environment of the laboratory, however, may have a range of unintended consequences that compromise the ecological validity of findings. For instance, a recent laboratory study of previously unacquainted individuals found that disclosures of core values (e.g., religious views) could be used by co-participants to judge the disclosing party's personality (Beer & Brooks, 2011). However, although this information is inference-rich, analysis of naturalistic first encounters indicates that people tend not to discuss such topics in the earliest phases of a relationship (Svennevig, 1999). Even in contexts where inference-rich information can be particularly relevant, such as discussing past romantic relationships in speed dating encounters, such topics tend to be postponed until other, less sensitive, topics have been discussed (Korobov, 2011; Stokoe, 2010; Turowetz & Hollander, 2012).

Therefore, what is clearly needed is research identifying aspects of acquaintance that are important to people in actual social encounters (Felmlee & Sprecher, 2000).

To enhance ecological validity, the study reported here utilises materials taken from naturally-occurring social interaction. In particular, it builds on work using the approach of conversation analysis. Researchers working in this area have shown that people, in their social interactions, display to one another the degree to which they are acquainted (Maynard & Clayman, 2003). Moreover, they have shown how acquaintance can be consequential for social conduct. For instance, Svennevig (1999) shows that conversations involving previously unacquainted parties are principally concerned with exchanging personal information, such as geographical origin (i.e., place of birth) and occupation. This information is used to establish links between the parties that are getting acquainted. As these parties become more acquainted, their interaction increasingly resembles conversations involving people with an established and ongoing relationship. Their talk becomes less focused on explicitly exchanging personal information; rather it increasingly involves discussing topics that are grounded in shared knowledge of one another. As initial encounters between previously unacquainted individuals clearly differ from interactions between acquainted parties, a motivation exists for people to maintain a contemporary and accurate understanding of who knows whom.

One way in which people can develop knowledge of one another is through social introductions. Studying people that have met for the first time, Pillet-Shore (2011) finds empirical support for Goffman's (1963) theory that becoming acquainted with another person is treated as a permanent change of a binary status, where a person moves from being a nonacquaintance to an acquaintance. Once this transition has taken place, Pillet-Shore (2011) shows people can be held accountable for forgetting that they have a prior acquaintance with another person. The study reported here compliments this analysis by examining recognisability in a different context: instances where reference is being made to some non-present third party. I show how speakers use different reference forms to index whether or not a recipient should be able to recognise a referent. I also show that recipients can challenge these reference forms, demonstrating that they too understand them to be indexing recognisability. Finally, I consider why people can be motivated to establish the recognisability of non-present third parties, contributing to an understanding of the social consequences of maintaining shared understanding of who knows whom.

Data

The data for this study were collected from three Community and Home Care (CHC) service centres of a broader organisation located in Adelaide, South Australia. The institutional purpose of this organisation is to utilise government funding to provide home-based personal care and domestic services and community-based services like shopping to people who are in some way incapacitated (most often, but not always, for age-related reasons). The data collected consists of recorded telephone conversations between clients and the employees who coordinate client services.

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from both the University of Adelaide and the collaborating institution. Eleven employees were approached to participate in the study, all of whom provided their informed consent. These employees (hereafter referred to as 'E' in the data transcripts) were trained to recruit clients for the study. A total of 152 clients ('C' in the transcripts) were invited to participate, with 142, or 91%, providing their informed consent to participate in the study. Data collection took place between January and September 2008 and 375 telephone calls were recording during this time. Calls were transcribed using a standardised approach (Hepburn, 2004; Hepburn & Bolden, 2013; Jefferson, 2004). All names in the transcripts presented in this article have been replaced with pseudonyms.

These data afford an opportunity to examine how third-party recognisability is discussed in a naturally-occurring social setting. Across the data, references are made to over 100 different care workers who deliver services and who are a subset of a larger group of workers. Due to the size of the CHC service centres and the regular replacement of workers, any given client is likely to be acquainted with some, but not all, of the service's care workers. Therefore, amidst the institutionally-specific business undertaken in the CHC calls, which can constrain participants talk in a range of ways (Drew & Heritage, 1992), there often arises a more generic social matter of referring to non-present third parties. The analytic focus of this article is how employees and clients manage to establish which members of the organisation clients should be able to recognise and the social consequences of these attempts.

Methodological approach

The analysis reported in this article utilises both the methodology and empirical findings of conversation analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Liddicoat, 2007; Sidnell, 2010; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013; ten Have, 1999) to examine practices people use to maintain a shared understanding of whom is known and unknown by a particular person. Using naturally-occurring talk-in-interaction as data (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998), I collected all instances in the CHC corpus in which a reference was made to a non-present third party. Through close and repeated analysis, I identified different ways in which references were made and responded to. Consistent with the aim of conversation analysis, my goal was to identify commonsense practices that people could be observed to utilise in orderly and recurrent ways, and which can therefore be understood to constitute a type of formal organisation in social interaction (Schegloff, 1999). In particular, this approach was used to identify commonsense methods that people use to establish a shared understanding of who knows whom.

Analysis

Although there is a considerable body of work that identifies how recognition and non-recognition can be indexed in the reference forms that speakers use (e.g., Auer, 1984; Blythe, 2010; Downing, 1996; Enfield & Stivers, 2007; Ford & Fox, 1996; Jackson, 2013; Mason, 2004), both this and the original work on which much of this research is based (Sacks, 1992; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996) does not extensively explore how recipients themselves understand such references[1]. Research in this area can be difficult, as person references are not typically responded to in an explicit manner (Heritage, 2007). However, the large number of references to third parties in the CHC corpus, for reasons discussed above, enabled collecting a range of instances where explicit responses are made to person references. Studying these instances contributes to existing knowledge on recognitional and non-recognitional references by identifying systematic ways people challenge their accuracy. I begin by examining instances where non-recognitional references come to be challenged by a recipient. These references are consistently challenged by correcting the presumption of nonacquaintance that is conveyed by the particular reference term that has been used. In contrast, I subsequently examine a range of different ways in which recognitional references can be challenged. Exploring ways people challenge the recognisability of referents identifies mechanisms they use to invoke and maintain a shared understanding of who knows whom.

Addressing presumed non-recognisability: Corrections following non-recognitional references

In the CHC corpus, non-recognitional references involve the production of a third party's name that is preceded by a descriptor like "*a care worker called"* or "*a lady called*." Data presented in this

section will show that recipients treat such references as indicating that they would not recognise the referent. Evidence for this can be observed in the following data fragment, where a presumption of non-recognisability, as indexed in a reference form, is challenged by the recipient. The recipient does this by informing their interlocutor that they have some knowledge of the referent. This knowledge is a contradiction to the non-recognitional reference that was used and is therefore treated as a correction of that reference. The focal person reference and the responsive turn that challenges it are highlighted in boldface.

(1) [CHC370, 0:32-0:49]

```
01 E11:   .hhh Now I'm jus' ringing=I th:ink V:anessa had said that
02        I: would pick you u:p this afternoon for the gro:up,=
03 C135:                                                    =Yes:
04 E11:   .mph But there's a lady called Kerry coming no:w
05        i:nstead.=
06 C135:           =I know he:r. hm
07           (0.2)
08 E11:   tch (.) A:h mi:ght be:. Ther- (.) there are two
09        Kerry[s >but<]
10 C135:       [  O : h] yes. There are two:, are [there]
11 E11:                                          [  E:i]ther
12        w(h)a(h)y. .uh-.huh! [  Y e : s .  ]
13 C135:                       [Alright then.]
```

This fragment begins with the employee informing the client of a future arrangement (lines 1-5). The 'conditionally relevant' (Schegloff, 1972) response at this point would be for the client to accept or reject the arrangement (Ekberg, 2011). The client, however, eschews that option. In saying "*I know he:r.*" (line 6), the client responds instead to something made incidentally relevant within the prior turn. In that prior turn, the employee indexed the non-recognisability of the referent by using the descriptor "*a lady called Kerry*" (line 4). The client's turn addresses an inapposite presumption that underpins that formulation: that the client does not know who Kerry is.

The client's turn at line 6 is an informing that adopts a different stance to that taken in the employee's prior turn. When produced in this position, such informing can be understood as implementing correction (Heritage, 1984; Robinson, 2009). In response, the employee tentatively accepts the possibility of an acquaintance between the client and Kerry ("*tch (.) A:h might be:.*", line 8) but subsequently informs the client that there are two care workers called Kerry. So in addition to acknowledging that the client's claim of recognition might be correct, the employee also provides evidence of how the client's claim could be incorrect. The client subsequently accepts this possibility. In this case, then, the correction has not proved to be entirely successful. The outcome of the exchange between lines 6 and 12, then, is a revised understanding that the client will be visited by a care worker whom she may, or may not, recognise.

The following data fragment is another instance where a recipient corrects a non-recognitional person description. On this occasion it leads to the acceptance of that correction.

(2) [CHC221, 0:43-1:36]

```
01 C075:  Laura,
02           (.)
03 E07:   Yes:.
04 C075:  A:h before a-a- (0.4) I a:sk you: something e:lse now on:
05        (0.2) Tu:esday you said the gi:rl will come for the:
06        (0.4) wh't ti:me?
07           (0.4)
08 E07:   tch U::hm [>let m-<]
09 C075:            [  Which ] gi:rl will gum? (Suzie?) er (Ba-) (.)
10        Sh:[ari?]
11 E07:      [E:rm] I'm n:ot quite sure who it is ye:ht?
     ((13 lines omitted; employee checks rosters))
```

```
25 E07:   Are you the:re missus Bartre?[v : :]
26 C075:                                [Ye:s.]
27 E07:   .hhh Yes it's at n- a round about ni:ne thi:rty on the
28        Tu:esday.
29           (.)
30 C075:  Ni:ne thirdy.=
31 E07:                =Y:eah [with a] ca:re worker called Sha:ri.
32 C075:                       [  e-  ]
33           (0.2)
34 C075:  m-
35           (.)
36 C075:  Yes,
37           (.)
38 C075:  She comes every Monda:y,
39 E07:   O:H does she come on Monday does she?
40 C075:  Yes.
41           (.)
42 E07:   O::h well th↓en y:es it's the sa:me Shari. >and she'll
43        [be there<] on Tuesd[a:y.]
```

This fragment provides additional evidence for formulations like "*a care worker called*" functioning as non-recognitional person descriptors. Towards the beginning of the fragment, the client has asked two questions about an upcoming service. The first question, containing a non-recognitional reference ("*the gi:rl*", line 5), concerns the time of the service. The second question concerns the identity of the care worker. Having asked about this at line 9, the client immediately continues her turn to produce a series of candidate answers (Pomerantz, 1988) to her own question. Her first try ("*Suzie?*", line 9*)* is apparently a mistake, as she attempts a second, the pronunciation of which is cut off before it is completed ("*Ba-*", line 9). Her third try ("*Sh:ari?*", line 10) shows that she has at least a familiarity (if not an actual acquaintance) with the referent that the employee later introduces with a non-recognitional descriptor (line 31). This is evidence for the non-recognitional reference being inappositely deployed. It is unlike Fragment 1 where, although the client asserts recognition, it is not analytically possible to be sure that the client actually knew Kerry (and, indeed, the employee goes on to question that possibility). In this fragment we can be confident (if not absolutely sure – it could be a different Shari; cf. line 42) that the client knows Shari because she is able to produce her name before the employee attempts to introduce her with a non-recognitional descriptor[2].

The client's response (across lines 34-38) to the employee's arrangement-making is to launch an insert sequence (Schegloff, 1972, 2007) to correct an erroneous presumption. This concerns the inapposite reference to Shari, which evidently claimed that the client was unacquainted with that care worker. In this instance, the client informs the employee that she knows Shari (because she comes to visit the client every Monday; see Robinson, 2009, for more on this). Following another insert sequence in which the employee checks, and the client confirms, that Shari is one of the client's regular care workers, the employee accepts the client's correction at line 42. Both at line 39 and again at line 42, the employee prefaces her turn with 'oh', displaying a 'change of state' (Heritage, 1984) that involves the revision of her previous claim about the recognisability of Shari. Both parties, then, have arrived at a shared understanding that the client knows Shari. Along with Fragment 1, this fragment establishes how reference to a third party can be understood, by the participants involved, as non-recognitional. It also demonstrates that people can suspend the current focus of a conversation (in this case, arrangement-making) in order to seek a shared understanding with their interlocutor of whether they are acquainted with a particular referent. In the next section, I explore how the same practice can be produced following recognitional references.

Addressing presumed recognisability: Corrections following recognitional references

Given non-recognitional references can be challenged by recipients, it is not surprising that the converse is also the case. However, the manner in which recipients respond to ostensibly inapposite recognitional references involves a more diverse range of practices than those following their non-recognitional counterparts. Practices used to challenge recognitional references include corrections, queries, and category-specific repair initiations. Each of these types of challenges will be considered in turn. I begin with the following instance, which involves the correction of a recognitional reference.

(3) [CHC289, 0:55-1:13]

```
01 E06:   .hhh [No:w-] I'm jus' ringing t' let you know you know on
02 C100:       [Yeah.]
03 E06:   Mo:nda:y, [ah A:n]nemarie won't be the::ah, .mp[hh uhm]
04 C100:            [yeah, ]                          [ no:. ]
05 E06:   b't Meli:nda's going to be theah.=
06 C100:                                    =Me[l i]:nda now that's a
07 E06:                                        [tch]
08 C100:  new name.=
09 E06:             =tch U:::hm o:h you mightn't know Mel.=She's been
10        with us a long ti:me. .h[h h ]
11 C100:                          [Ye:a]h b't [ I : [haven't]
12 E06:                                       [Ye:h [  .h h ]
13 C100:  ha[(d her.)]
14 E06:     [ No: b't] you  mightn't hav' met her.=So she's gonna be
15        there about eight oh'clo[:ck.  ]
```

With respect to the correction of a reference form, this data fragment is a counterpart to Fragments 1 and 2, in the sense that it relates to a recognitional as opposed to a non-recognitional reference form. The employee informs her client of an arrangement and this informing involves referring to a substitute care worker. Following that reference, instead of accepting or rejecting the arrangement, the client rushes to take a turn at talk. Although she does not produce a *conditionally* relevant response to the action being pursued in the prior turn (an arrangement), the client's response is *incidentally* relevant, given the content of the prior turn. In saying, "*Meli:nda now that's a new name.*" (lines 6-8), the client corrects what she takes to be an erroneous presumption in the employee's reference form "*Meli:nda*" (line 5); that she is able to recognise the referent. The client's turn is an informing which displays that she has understood the reference 'Melinda' as indexing recognisability. Highlighting divergent understandings about Melinda, the client's turn corrects the prior use of a recognitional reference form by revealing that she does not know the referent.

The employee's response to the client's correction shows that the client's recognition of Melinda might still be possible. That response (at lines 9-10) accepts the possibility that the client may be unacquainted with Melinda, and as in Fragment 2 is prefaced with a change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984), but also provides two pieces of information that may help the client to locate Melinda as one of her acquaintances. The first piece of evidence is the employee's use of the diminutive "*Mel*" (line 9) as an alternative, and yet recognitional, reference to the same referent. This allows for the possibility that the client may know Melinda as Mel and can use that reference form as a resource for recognising her. The employee also explains that Mel(inda) is a longstanding employee. This allows for the possibility that the client may have had Mel(inda) for a service in the distant past and that this is the reason that she does not recognise her name (rather than actually being unacquainted with her). In this sense, the employee's response can be heard as not completely accepting the client's correction. For her part, however, the client does not utilise these possibilities for recognition. Rather, she again reasserts her unacquaintance with Mel(inda) (lines 11-13). This corrected version is subsequently accepted as a possibility by the employee (line 14). Having resolved this matter, and coming to an agreement over the client's recognition of Melinda (or non-

recognition as it is), the employee is then in a position to return to her base action of informing the client of an arrangement (from line 14).

In Fragments 1-3 we have observed how recipients can respond to an incidentally relevant component of a prior turn – the person reference form that was used – in order to correct a presumption underpinning that reference. In the case of non-recognitional reference forms, corrections can result in shared understanding of recognisability. Alternatively, corrections following recognitional references can lead to shared understanding of non-recognisability. This is evidence that correcting inapposite references can be sufficiently important for people to suspend a current activity (such as arrangement-making) in order to attempt it. Given that care workers deliver personal and sometimes intimate services within clients' homes, establishing and maintaining a shared understanding of whom the client has a prior relationship with appears important for the parties involved. I return to this point below. Before that, however, I consider other practices that address recognitional person references. These are of interest because they identify potential problems with reference forms with less certainty than is conveyed by correcting. Analysing them enables an appreciation of the social considerations that are central to participants' attempts to maintain shared understandings of who knows whom.

Addressing presumed recognisability: Queries following recognitional references

In this section, I examine a practice where a recognitional person reference is followed by a query, by the recipient, of their knowledge of the referent. They are constructed as polar questions that make confirmation or disconfirmation a relevant next action (Raymond, 2003). By suspending production of the conditionally relevant response, these queries enable a potential reformulation of the reference form that was used and, by extension, the underlying assumption of recognisability.

Fragment 4 is an instance where a recognition query is made following an informing containing a recognitional person reference, thereby suspending production of the conditionally relevant response. Note that the client is sucking on a piece of confectionary (a boiled sweet) throughout this interaction, which sometimes interferes with her speech.

(4) [CHC128, 0:19-0:52]

```
01 E01:   [U::]hm tch (0.2) thomorrow mo:rning,
02 C040:  Mh[mm?]
03 E01:     [U:h] Te:ammy will be the:re .hhh at about ten to ni:ne.
04 C040:  ((rolls confectionary around her mouth for 1 second))
05        *H(h)ave* I met Tammy?
06 E01:   Tammy? She:'s worked- she works quite a lot of e:venings
07        and weekends as well so maybe:: .hh (0.2) o:n s:ome
08        [occasions] you m:a:y [h:a:v]e,
09 C040:  [ m m h m ]          [ Ye:s]
10 C040:  I may have met 'er when ((rolls confectionary around her
11        mouth for 0.4 seconds)) er when Pete w'z- Paul was in
12        hospit'[l.]
13 E01:          [ Y]e::ah [one of those] times >you know< when you
14 C040:                   [   m m m m  ]
15 E01:   had some extra sta:ff or something¿ .h[hh  But  an]ywa:y
16 C040:                                        [(yeas/yeah)]
17        u:hm you'll like her Tammy's good fun. .hh
18        S[o she'll be t]here a:t ten to ni:ne.
19 C040:   [ oh   right. ]
```

As with the instances considered above, the employee's arrangement-making turn (lines 1-3) establishes acceptance or rejection of the proposed arrangement as conditionally relevant. However, that turn contained a recognitional person reference ("*Te:ammy*", line 3), which turns out to be an ostensible source of trouble for the client. Rather than correcting the reference form (as

seen in the previous fragments), the client queries her ability to recognise Tammy ("**H(h)ave* I met Tammy?*", line 5). Whereas corrections claim a necessary and specified source of trouble, this query does not make the same sort of commitment. Indeed, the client is treating the reference as a source of trouble, but she does so without claiming that the reference form was inappositely designed. It does, however, prove sufficient for the employee to modify the assertion of recognisability that was made through her earlier use of a recognitional reference form. Although her account of Tammy's employment arrangements provides evidence of how the client might know her, the straightforward recognition that was implied earlier has now been modulated. The client's query has generated a space within which her familiarity with Tammy can be discussed, confirmed, rejected, or, as in this case, rendered equivocal. A similar outcome is achieved in the following fragment.

(5) [CHC167, 0:26-1:10]

```
01 E07:   .hhh No:w. (0.2) tch (.) A::rh=>let me< s:ee what h've we
02        done. What did I >ring you abou(t).<=O:H u:hm your
03        shoppi:ng:¿ you:r i:hning shift on the Thu::rsday. .hhh
04        Now we've managed to get it- uhm Te:ri's going to do that
05        pe:rmanently so she'll always do it on the Thu::rsda:y.
06 C053:  °N°ow have I HAd Teri before?
07           (0.3)
08 E07:   U:[h yes] she knows yo:u. Yes:.
09 C053:    [(ah-)]
10           (0.2)
11 C053:  I do. [(ah)]
12 E07:          [ Yes]:. .hh U::hm, (0.3) n:o:w I'll t(h)ell you
13        what ti:me it will be:h.
14           (0.5)
15 E07:   If you >just hold on a< m:inute I'm j'st flicking through
16        the ro:sters:.
17           (0.4)
18 E07:   .hhhh U:hm it'll be: 'bout 'leven oh'clo:ck.
19           (.)
20 E07:   O:n the Thu:rsda[y.]
21 C053:                  [ Y]:eah. [it's alright.=(I'll] do)
22 E07:                             [  tch     Ohka:y?  ]
23 C053:  the i::rning anytime (you have.)
24 E07:   A:lright. Ohkay. .hhh And tomorro:w: I think C:arla's doing
25        the shopping and I think that's a little bit later in the
26        da:y. .hh
```

As in previous fragments, the conditionally relevant response is again eschewed by the client, who instead queries her acquaintance with the care worker ("*°N°ow have I HAd Teri before?*", line 6). As in Fragment 4, the client initiates negotiation of the recognisability of the referent by asking whether Teri has previously visited her. The employee's response does not answer the client's question in the relevant format. The client has asked whether Teri has been previously allocated to deliver a service for her. The employee responds by claiming that Teri knows the client (line 8). The employee's response, then, involves shifts in the subject (from the client to Teri), the verb (from "*had*" to "*know*"), and the tense (from past to present). The client in turn translates this response by referring to herself as the subject, while utilising the verb and tense of the employee's response (line 11). By answering the client's question in this way, the employee specifically avoids claiming whether the client will recognise Teri whilst nonetheless implying that recognition should be possible.

Unlike the corrections considered above, the practice exhibited in Fragments 4 and 5 does not convey with certainty that an inapposite reference has been used. Rather, a query is a means by which a person can create a space in which modifying a claim of acquaintance is possible, without claiming that it should necessarily occur. Recognition queries thus represent a weaker challenge to a reference than corrections but nonetheless support an analysis that people understand particular reference forms to index recognisability, and that they are prepared to suspend an otherwise ongoing activity to address ostensible problems with this. It suggests the purpose of such moves is

not simply a matter of correctness. It may be more broadly concerned with determining whether some future social encounter will involve a person who should be recognised or someone with whom an acquaintance will need to be developed. We now turn to a practice that produces an even weaker challenge to a recognitional reference but is nonetheless still concerned with the recognisability of a referent.

Addressing presumed recognisability: Category-specific repair initiations following recognitional references

In this section, we observe an instance where a recognitional person reference is followed by other-initiated repair which is category-specific (Schegloff, 2007: 101). These repair initiators are designed to locate the part of some prior talk with which a recipient is having trouble (Drew, 1997: 69-71). Their use raises the possibility that the speaker has not been able to hear what their interlocutor has said, but also implicates the possibility that the recipient heard the reference but has a problem with the reference form that has been used. This repair initiator can thus be understood as a premonitory indicator that the recipient does not recognise the referent and, therefore, of a possibly inappositely designed person reference. The equivocality of this practice (that is, whether the target trouble is one of hearing or appositeness) makes this practice weaker than the acquaintance queries that we considered above. The following is an instance where this is the case.

(6) [CHC035, 0:44-1:33]

```
01 E07:   [>I] jus' wanted t' ring to let you< kno:w that u:m tch
02        (0.3)I left a message yesterday b't I'm not sure whether
03        you got that on your pho:[ne or] not.=[Gwen's  co-]
04 C011:                           [ No: ]      [No I haven']
     ((7 lines omitted; talk about the client's answering machine))
12 E07:   [ Y]e:ah that's annoying >isn't it=well< [Gwen's] coming
13 C011:                                           [ m m. ]
14        toda:y a:nyway.=
15 C011:                 =W[ho ihs?]
16 E07:                    [  .hhh ] E:r her name's Gwen:. .hhh
17 C011:  [ Gw]en¿
18 E07:   [tch]
19 E07:   >Gwen.< Yes. [ S h e]'ll be there >a little bit< la:ter.
20 C011:              [(yes,)]
     ((10 lines omitted; arrangement-making continues))
31 C011:  Now I've not had Gwen before then so what- what is she
32        lihke?
```

In this fragment, the client initiates repair following the employee's production of a recognitional person reference to a replacement care worker ("*Gwen*", line 12). She initiates repair using a category-specific question ("*Who ihs?*", line 15). This repair initiator displays that the client identified that a reference to a person was made, but she has some sort of trouble with that reference. The employee treats the client's repair initiation as indicating a possible problem with the suitability (rather than the audibility) of the reference form used. Rather than merely repeating the troublesome reference term, the employee now introduces the client to the referent with a non-recognitional person description ("*E:r her name's Gwen:.*", line 16), displaying an understanding that the client may not be acquainted with Gwen.

There is more evidence in this fragment of the apparently inappropriately designed recognitional reference when the client informs the employee "*Now I've not had Gwen before then*" (line 31). This is further demonstration of the employee's inapposite use of a reference form that implied recognisability, and that other-initiated repair can be used to address that reference form. In response to the repair initiation the employee modified, rather than simply repeated, the problematic reference. In so doing, she demonstrates that she too took the problem to be one of

appropriateness, rather than of hearing. In this way, an ambiguous repair initiation (relative to those considered earlier) occasioned a change in the parties' shared understanding of whom the client knows. It is therefore another type in a range of practices available to recipients of ostensibly inapposite recognitional person references that can be used to occasion a space in which recognisability can be discussed.

Although category-specific repair initiations can yield self-repairs of reference forms, this is not always the case (Drew, 1997; Schegloff, 2004; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). In the following fragment, the employee merely repeats the trouble-source turn and, in so doing, reasserts an acquaintance between the client and care worker.

(7) [CHC102, 0:04-0:20]

```
01 E04:   .hhh A:lan w- we have Tr:acey that c'n come and see you
02        t'morrow.
03           (.)
04 C031:  Ew:?
05 E04:   Tr:acey.
06           (0.4)
07 C031:  O::H I: know Tra:cey. Y[eah that's fi:n]e.
08 E04:                          [ ye:ah.   .hhh ]
09 E04:   A:lright=Now she'll probly be: the::h ab- (0.3) r::ound
10        abo:uht: u::hm: (0.5) quarter to twelve oh'clo:ck.
11           (0.5)
12 E04:   Oh[k a : y ?   ]
13 C031:    [That's al:ri]ght yeah.
```

As with Fragment 6, the client here responds to a turn containing a person reference ("*Tr:acey*", line 1) with a category-specific repair initiation ("*Ew:?*", line 4), displaying that he understands a person reference was (or should have been) used and that he has some sort of trouble with that reference. By repeating only the reference term ("*Tr:acey.*", line 5) the employee's response, unlike its counterpart in Fragment 6, treats the client's trouble as one of hearing rather than suitability. The client's subsequent response, however, indicates this may have been an inappropriate treatment. The client's first move is not to reply at all (line 6), indicating a possible upcoming dispreferred response (Pomerantz, 1984). He then displays that his actual trouble was one of delayed recognition. His change-of-state token and assertion of acquaintance (at line 7) displays that he previously had trouble recognising Tracey. This accounts for why he used category-specific repair initiation at line 4. It appears that he designed that interrogative not to convey a problem of hearing but rather one of suitability. But as he now displays, the production of that repair initiator was predicated on his delayed recognition of Tracey as someone with whom he is actually acquainted. So again, the use of category-specific repair initiation can be observed as displaying a problem with the suitability of a person reference form that has been used in a prior turn. It constitute another practice through which recipients can question the recognisability of referents and thereby seek to establish a shared understanding of whom they know.

Discussion & conclusions

Previous social psychological research has identified ways in which acquaintance can be a crucial determinant of how people relate when they come together to interact with one another. The analysis reported here demonstrates that, at a fundamental level, the recognisability is important for people even in instances where they are not currently interacting with the person in question. It shows that participants in social encounters are motivated to build and maintain shared understandings of who knows whom. In maintaining this understanding, both parties can play a role. Prior studies of conversation have identified referential methods people use to index recognisability and non-recognisability (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996); these methods are used in the

same way within an institutional setting where CHC are organised. This current study therefore supports the previous research, whilst also extending it by focusing on systematic ways in which recipients can respond to these references. Although recipients do not routinely respond to person references (Heritage, 2007), one exception is when they elect to challenge the presumption underpinning the selection of either a recognitional or non-recognitional reference form. In the CHC data, corrections could be used to address potential problems with recognitional and non-recognitional references, whilst recognition queries and category-specific repair initiations could also be used to address potential problems with recognitional references. Both the reference forms and the practices that can be used to question them are productive commonsense techniques; they enable social actors to efficiently establish and maintain shared understandings of who knows whom.

The reported analysis shows that while person references are usually formulated as a part of a larger activity (in the cases examined here, making an arrangement), there are occasions where recipients deem it worthwhile to suspend the current focus to address an ostensible problem with a reference form that was used. This reveals two predominant features of person references. First, they can be designed to index a recipient's supposed ability to recognise or not recognise a non-present referent. As these references are only sometimes exposed as inapposite, their use seems to be typically correct and constitutes a productive way of efficiently referring to others (see also Land & Kitzinger, 2005). Second, that people do address inappositely designed person references reveals the importance, for participants involved in social encounters, of maintaining a shared understanding of who knows whom.

In the instances collected for this study, there is an asymmetrical distribution in the way clients challenged recognitional and non-recognitional reference forms. Recipients of inapposite recognitional references respond in a range of ways to address potential or actual problems with those forms. These include corrections, recognition queries, and category-specific repair initiations. Alternatively, recipients of inapposite non-recognitional descriptions in the CHC data corpus only produce corrections to deal with the problematic reference form. This may reflect a relatively higher degree of confidence in one's immunity to confabulation than to forgetting. In other words, people might be prepared to more readily accept the possibility that they have forgotten a person than the possibility of having a false impression of knowing someone. Further research is needed to explore this possibility.

We can have a clearer sense, however, of why people can be motivated to establish and maintain a socially shared understanding of who knows whom. Studies of naturally-occurring conversations clearly identify how acquaintance can matter for social interaction. People appear motivated to display that they are competent social actors, capable of remembering the people that they have met (Ekberg, 2012). Failure to recall an acquaintance is potentially accountable, as it portrays the forgotten person as someone not worth remembering (Pillet-Shore, 2011). Beyond this, people have an additional motivation to determine whether they know a third party, as this has implications for the type of interaction that they will have with that person. In particular, first encounters between previously unacquainted parties incorporate different activities than those between parties with an existing acquaintance (Korobov, 2011; Pillet-Shore, 2011; Stokoe, 2010; Svennevig, 1999; Turowetz & Hollander, 2012). Given these motivations, it is clearly important for people like the clients in the above data to understand whether or not they know a particular third party, as this may influence how they conduct themselves when they come into that third party's presence. The practices of formulating and responding to person references that are considered in this article are basic commonsense resources people utilise in their efforts to understand the socially consequential matter of who knows whom.

At the practical level of the institutional context that comprises the focus of this study, establishing who knows whom can be important for service quality. For clients, knowledge of who will deliver their care service will very likely shape their expectations for that service. CHC is routinely delivered in clients' homes and can involve intimate tasks like maintaining personal hygiene. A care worker's identity, in particular whether they have a prior relationship with the client, may influence the way in which the service is delivered. The data presented here illustrates how the staff organising CHC services can perceive this importance. Not only do they inform clients of the identity of care workers in advance of their service, they also use reference forms that convey whether clients should have knowledge of particular workers. Unlike informing clients of a service delivery time, which is essential to ensure they are available when the service is to be delivered, informing clients of a care worker's identity is discretionary. In the data collected for this study, however, CHC staff always include this information, thereby displaying an understanding that the identity of care workers is an important part of service delivery. Moreover, this article demonstrates it is not merely the identity of the care worker that is relevant, but also whether or not they are recognisable to the client.

The study reported here contributes to understanding orderly ways in which people conduct themselves in social interactions. Prior research has identified ways in which people can design third-party references to denote particular types of social relationships (Jackson, 2013; Stivers, 2007). In addition to such relational considerations, the research presented here explores ways in which people concern themselves with the recognisability of third-party referents. In particular, it demonstrates how recipients of ostensibly inapposite person references can select from a range of resources to occasion space in which an understanding of recognisability can come to be revised, thereby establishing a revised and contemporary understanding of who knows whom. This can be crucial for the participants involved, as acquaintance is a key determinant of how one interacts with another. One of the aims of the social psychological study of relationships has been to understand and predict how people will behave (Berscheid, 1994); here we can observe this is also relevant for social actors themselves. It shapes current interactions, and well as having implications for interactions in the future.

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[1] There is a footnote in a paper by Schegloff (1996: 478-80) that describes how repair can be used to 'downgrade' recognitional references to non-recognitional forms and, conversely, to 'upgrade' non-recognitionals to recognitionals. However, these observations are made with reference to single instances of data which are only briefly considered.

[2] When the employee comes to refer to the replacement care worker (line 31), it appears that she does not notice the client's earlier use of Shari's name (at line 10). If she did, she would have a basis for *not* deploying a non-recognitional descriptor later in the call to refer to the same referent. It may be the case that the employee has not noticed the client's earlier reference to Shari because she herself has started talking.